

VZCZCXRO6488  
PP RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHEK #0948/01 2630710  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 190710Z SEP 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1359  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2657  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0057  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3046  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2431  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000948

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND SCA/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [KPAO](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH KYRGYZ MINISTER OF EDUCATION

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: On September 12, the Ambassador met with Kyrgyz Minister of Education Boldjurova. Boldjurova expressed pride in the steps made over the years to improve the level of education in Kyrgyzstan, but acknowledged that there should be a renewed focus on improving teacher quality. The Ambassador pressed Boldjurova to respond to several USAID initiatives that would help improve parts of the education sector. The Ambassador also described plans being developed by Peace Corps to provide new teaching materials to rural schools and to work with students during the anticipated long winter break. End Summary.

Tradition of Goodwill  
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¶2. (SBU) On September 12, the Ambassador held an introductory meeting with Minister of Education Ishengul Boldjurova. Boldjurova opened the meeting by expressing her gratitude for all the assistance non-governmental organizations and USAID have provided Kyrgyzstan. She said this has created a tradition of goodwill between her ministry and these groups. Boldjurova particularly pointed to efforts by USAID and the Embassy's Democracy Commission to support academic honesty in universities and the National Scholarship Testing Project as areas of success.

¶3. (SBU) Boldjurova did acknowledge that more attention must be focused on quality of teachers and implementing modern teaching methodologies. She said schools need to be friendlier to students, and schools need to be teaching students those skills that are needed in their regions. While Boldjurova demurred when asked specifically what additional resources were needed, she said that she wanted to ensure that all assistance from the various donors was coordinated through her ministry.

USAID Stands Ready to Help, If You'll Only Let It  
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¶4. (SBU) The Ambassador thanked Boldjurova for her kind words, and pointed to USAID's basic education project as a concrete way the United States could help shore up a lagging portion of the

educational sector. She noted that USAID has been waiting since August for the Ministry's approval of a memorandum of understanding in order to begin work. USAID had coordinated with donors and provided a matrix of proposed activities and responsibilities to the ministry, but had not received any positive response. The Ambassador also noted she shared the belief that the National Scholarship Testing Project is an important initiative and that she stands ready to discuss any concerns the Ministry may have over the program.

#### Peace Corps Educational Initiatives

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15. (SBU) The Ambassador informed Boldjurova that a group of Peace Corps volunteers have almost finished writing a comprehensive Kyrgyz-English grammar book and an English-to-Kyrgyz dictionary for students studying English in rural areas. She also said that Peace Corps is interested in working with the ministry to develop programs that could be implemented by volunteers during the anticipated winter school shutdowns. Volunteers have suggested working with teachers on creating curricula and conducting short English language camps. Boldjurova was very appreciative of all Peace Corps' efforts. She directed her staff to work with Peace Corps to ensure that they received all possible assistance from the Ministry.

#### Comment

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16. (SBU) Boldjurova has been in her position nine months, a relatively long tenure for a position that has had 11 ministers in the past 10 years. While there have been difficulties with this Ministry on a number of issues, it is encouraging to note that on September 16, USAID received their first positive signals from the

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Ministry on their memorandum of understanding. It is possible our relations with this Ministry will be taking a turn for the better.

Gfoeller